(a) the number of persons a PCO serves presently, state-wise;

(b) -whether there are any special steps contemplated for improving this ratio in North-East Region; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Number of estimated urban population served by each PCO is given in the statement (See *below)*

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The target of 1000 PCOs has been fixed for N.E. Circle during the year

Statement

P.C.O./Population Ratio as on 31-05-1998

s. No.	Name of Circle/ District	PCO/ Population (Urban) Ratio
1.	A & N	1/804
2.	Andhra Pradesh	1/704
3.	Assam	1/686
4.	Bihar	1/1079
5.	Gujarat	1/532
6.	Haryana	1/635
7.	Himachal Pradesh	1/165
8.	J & K	1/796
9.	Karnataka	1/605
10.	Kerala	1/400
11.	M.P.	1/716
12.	Maharashtra	1/657
13.	North-Eastern	1/662
14.	Orissa	1/394
15.	Punjab	1/291
16.	Rajasthan	1/614
17.	Tamil Nadu	1/644
18.	Uttar Pradesh (Eastern & "Western)	1/863
19.	West Bengal	1/1220
20.	Mumbai	1/260
21.	Calcutta	1/712
22.	Delhi	1/303
23.	Chennai	1/202
	TOTAL	1/558

रेलवे स्टेशनों पर डाक/उपडाकघर

2940. **श्री चीमनभाई हरिभाई शुक्ला**: कया संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे किः

(क) कया सरकार ने नए डाक/उपडाकघर और रेलवे स्टेशनों पर ब्रांच डाकघरों को खोलने की कोई नीति तैयार की है और लक्ष्य निर्धारित किया है,

(ख) यदि हां,तो क्या राजकोट के रैया मार्ग क्षेत्र में एक नया डाकघर खोलने का कोई प्रस्ताव है,

(ग) क्या वड़ोदरा, अजमेर, मुंबई, भावनगर, रतलाम और राजकोट मंडलों के मुख्य रेलवे स्टेशनों पर ब्रांच डाकघर खोलने का कोई प्रस्ताव है,

(घ) क्या इस संबंध में किसी सांसद अथवा परामर्ष समिति के सदस्य से इस प्रस्ताव सहित कोई पत्र प्राप्त हुआ है, और

(ड) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है और अव तक उस पर क्या कार्रवाई की गई है?

संचार मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री कबीन्द्र पुरकायस्थ): (क) सरकार द्वारा रेलवे स्टेशनों पर डाकघर खोलने की कोई नीति नहीं बनाई गई है।

(ख) रैया रोड में दिनांक 28.2.97 को एक डाकघर खोला गया था, परंतु रैया रोड क्षेत्र में उपयुक्त भवन उपलब्ध न होने के कारण यह डाकघर कालावाड रोड डाकघर परिसर में कार्य कर रहा है।

(ग) बडोदरा, अजमेर, भावनगर और राजकोट डिवीजनों के अंतर्गत मुख्य रेलवे स्टेशनों पर शाखा डाकघर खोलने का कोई प्रस्ताव नहीं है। रतलाम आर.एस. रोड तथा रतलाम रेलवे कालोनी डाकघर पहले ही रतलाम डिवीजन में कार्य कर रहे हैं।

(घ) मुख्य पोस्टमास्टर जनरल , गुजरात सर्किल, अहमदाबाद के साथ दिनांक 17.11.97 को हुई बैठक के दौरान रैया रोड, राजकोट में डाकघर खोलने के लिए श्री बल्लभाई कठारिया, सांसद, राजकोट से एक पत्र/अनुरोध प्राप्त हुआ है।

(ड) जैसा कि उपर्यूक्त (ख) में उल्लेख किया गया है, रैया रोड डाकघर दिनांक 28.2.97 को पहले ही खोल दिया है।

British Telecom's Hidden Agenda on South Asian Hub

2941 SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appered in the Hindustan Times dated 17th June, 1998 captioned "British Telecom's hidden agenda on South Asia Hub with VSNL".

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the agreement has since been signed with British Telecom, and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) VSNL had floated an RFP (Request for proposal) to form a separate joint Venture Company exclusively for the purpose of becoming global player and also setting up of a regional hub in India for transmitting International Telecom Traffic terminating and originating outside India.

(c) No, Sir. The detailed business plans have been invited from the short listed parties.

Telephone facilities on Gram-Panchayats of North-Eastern States

2942. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Telephone connections released to the Gram Panchayats in the North-East States on State-wise basis;

(b) whether Government are aware of the fact that the Telephones are not installed in the Panchayat Offices;

(c) the number of Panchayat Offices where the telephone facilities are available directly at the offices in the State of Manipur;

(d) the steps taken by Government to give telephone connections directly to the Panchayat Offices;

(e) the number of Panchayat Offices where telephone facilities are not extended; and

(f) by when Government would be able to extend all the telephone facilities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) The number of Telephone connections provided in Gram Panchayats in the North East States, state-wise are as under:-

State	No. of Gram Panchayats	No. of Gram Panchayats covered with telephone facilities as on 31.3.1998
Assam	2485	2094
Arunachal Pradesh	944	386
Manipur	430	359
Meghalaya	450	415
Mizoram	613	419
Nagaland	1000	406
Tripura	910	547
Total	6832	4636

(b) to (d) As per the Departmental Policy, each village is to be provided with at least one Public Telephone which is denoted as Village Public Telephone (VPT). This VPT can be installed at any suitable place such as Grocery Shop, Post Office or Panchayat Bhavan. There is no policy of the Government to provide Telephone for the exclusive use of the Panchayat Offices.

359 VPTS in Manipur are installed for use of public in Panchayats at suitable places. As regards Nos. of the VPTs in Panchayat Bhavan, the information is being collected.

(e) The total number of Panchayats where the Telephone facilities are not extended are as under:

State	No. of Gran Panchayats where Telephone facility not extended
Assam	391
Arunachal Pradesh	558
Manipur	70
Meghalaya	35